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thirteenth century; 19 D i. f. 30, a French MS., *Alexander*, of the fourteenth century; 20 a V f. 54, also a French *Alexander*, of the same period; 10 E iv. ff. 2, 47, &c., a French MS., *Decretals*, of the fourteenth century; Harl. MSS. 4,972 f. 20, a French MS., *Apocalypse*, of the thirteenth century; 273 ff. 73, 78, an English MS., *Bestiary*, of the fourteenth century; 3,448, an Italian MS., *Flore di Virtù*, of the fourteenth century; 4,372 f. 79 b, a French MS., *Valerius Maximus*, of the middle of the fifteenth century; 4,379 f. 32 b, a French MS., *Froissart*, of late in the fifteenth century; and Burney MSS. 275 f. 404, a French MS., *Priscian*, of the fourteenth century.

Figures of the mermaid also occur in some of the early printed books, both in quaint old cuts and in those that are "adorned with copper plates." Many of these are strange in their form, and occasionally hideous in their features and accompaniments. Figs. 35, 36, and 37 represent three extraordinary monsters, which will serve to show the extent of wildness to which the imagination of the old engravers sometimes carried them. The latter is a Merman or Triton said to have been captured in 1531, and sent alive to the King of Poland, but afterwards returned to the water. The other two, also copied from Rondelet, and engraved as "exact portraictures" of the animals themselves, are respectively called the "Bishop," which is stated to have been caught in the British Channel in 1531, and the "Monk," captured in Norway, and so christened because "it had the face of a man, but rustic and not very graceful, with a smooth shaven head; on the shoulders a kind of monk's hood; two long fins instead of arms, the end of the body terminating in a long tail. The middle part was much broader and assumed the form of a military breastplate." These three engravings, as well as Fig. 40, I am permitted to use from an excellent little volume entitled "Monsters of the Deep," a perusal of which I very heartily recommend to my readers; it is an admirable book, both in matter, manner, and illustrations. Fig. 13 is also a copy from

an old engraving, and exhibits a mermaid said to have been captured "on the coast of Borne or Bœren, in the Department of Amboyna. It was 59 inches long, and as thick in proportion as an eel. It lived on land in a tank full of water, four days and seven hours. From time to time it uttered little cries like those of a mouse. Nor would it eat, though little fishes were offered to it, shell fish, crabs, shrimps, and the like."

It would be interesting, did space permit, to quote at length some of the remarkable, and, in many instances, droll accounts that have from time to time been printed of the sight or the capture of these fabulous creatures, but I am compelled to refrain from so doing, and must content myself by saying that ever and again mermaids have been exhibited and "made much of," both in England and in other countries, and indeed may yet be seen preserved in some museums. The one given in Fig. 38 was exhibited in the Leyden Museum, and Fig. 39 was shown in the early part of the present century in London. Like Barnum's late imposition, this monstrosity "was a hideous combination of a dried monkey's head and body, and the tail of a fish."

I must now, however, without even alluding to the many curious traditions that have been, and still are, current in various parts of the country concerning the connection of mermaids with certain localities—as "mermaids' pools," "wells," "meadows," and the like—or without alluding to the beliefs that obtain everywhere regarding them and their miraculous powers, or to many stories that are extant recounting their union with "mortal man"—bring my present article to a close. Those who desire to read the famous story of the Mermaid Melusina and her marriage with the adopted son of Emmerick, Count of Poitou, will find it and other kindred traditionary tales deliciously told by Baring-Gould in his "Curious Myths," to which I refer them with much pleasure. Some day I may possibly continue this subject, by speaking of other "queer fish" and their relation to Art, literature, and legendary lore.

'THE RACE FOR WEALTH,' BY W. P. FRITH, R.A.



FTEN in reading criticisms of novels or plays we come upon some such remark as this: "The story would have been much more interesting had it been told in one volume instead of three," or, "The drama would have gained in intensity and force had it been compressed into three acts instead of having been extended into five."

Now, 'The Race for Wealth' is a story, or rather drama, in the Hogarthian sense, and it consists of five pictorial acts. The first represents the anteroom of the "great financier"—the designation most affected by these specious pests—and it is crowded with all sorts of people, fashionable young girls, married ladies, a kindly-faced country gentleman, a fair young widow and her pretty boy, a clergyman with his wife and daughters, and sundry other visitors, gentle and simple, all anxious to secure shares in the mine about which the arch-projector has spoken to them so glowingly in his "confidential" circulars. The second act reveals the palatial home of the supposed Midas, the walls glowing with examples of those masters whom his "Art adviser," the picture-dealer, recommended as the "proper thing." Mr. Midas, with the supreme confidence of his class, expatiates to a couple of ladies on the beauties of a Turner, while in the farther room we see his wife receiving her guests in full-blown state, as they are announced by a portly groom of the chambers. No. 3 represents 'The Victims,' who in this case are a country rector and his family. They were just about to gather round the breakfast-table—father, mother, two daughters, and their brother, the young sailor-boy—when the post brought the terrible tidings, both by letter and newspaper, of the crash. In No. 4 the great financier stands in the Old Bailey dock; and in No. 5, clad in the prison-garb, we

see him with his fellow-convicts taking his allotted exercise in the yard of Millbank Prison.

It seems rather an ungracious thing to say, especially of one who has done more on canvas for the current history of our time, in respect of its social manners and customs, than any other living painter, but we cannot help thinking that the remark contained in our opening sentence is applicable to the series of five pictures we have just been attempting to describe. Two of the acts, the second and the fifth, especially the latter, are to our mind unnecessary. The moment the artist has satisfied spectators that the prisoner is guilty, and will be condemned, as Mr. Frith has so triumphantly done here, that moment the curtain ought to fall. The taste is questionable, if not altogether morbid, which would be gratified by such a sight as a set of hideously attired, hideously visaged convicts walking round, in single file under the watchful eyes of their gaolers, the high-walled boundaries of a prison-yard. Mr. Frith, however, has thought fit to do otherwise, and, looking at this social drama from his point of view, we regard the series as perhaps his finest achievement. We follow the actors all through the piece, and readily recognise them under every varying circumstance of the drama. The figures, in size, are admirably related to their surroundings, and in character are as completely differentiated on the canvas as they are in real life. Mr. Frith's scheme of colour is purposely kept unforced and in rather a subdued key, while the *chiaro-oscuro* of the various interiors is managed with rare intelligence. 'The Race for Wealth,' in short, is a chapter of contemporaneous history recorded by a hand so cunning, and at the same time so faithful, that it will always be referred to in future as authoritative.